



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Division
Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

16 July 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to update you on the outcome of the Local Inquiry relating to Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) proposed Byelaws for Salmon and Sea Trout. The Planning Inspectorate concluded the Inquiry and provided the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs with a final report on 3 June, which has today been published along with a Ministerial Written Statement outlining the Minister's final decision. The statement and a copy of the Inspector's Recommendation Report can be found at the following link:

https://gov.wales/written-statement-outcome-local-inquiry-natural-resources-wales-proposed-all-wales-salmon-and-sea?_ga=2.35170979.380425072.1563178964-1735457580.1537351409

It is clear to see, from the Report, the depth of feeling and passion on both sides. It is also clear to see there is common ground, between all sides, that Salmon and Sea Trout stocks in Wales have been suffering an ongoing decline. It is therefore generally agreed there is a problem. There is also an acceptance, as a matter of principle that its important stock levels do not fall to unsafe levels, and declines need to be reversed.

Having reflected on all the evidence and arguments put forward, the Minister agrees with the Inspectorate; the Byelaws are necessary, proportionate and reasonable in view of the decline of Salmon and Sea Trout stocks throughout Wales. She has therefore decided to confirm the Byelaws, and for them to come into force on 1 January 2020.

However, she was also struck by the arguments put forward by many of those who attended the Inquiry and acknowledges angling is only one of many interventions which affect the survival of Salmon and Sea Trout.

The impact of agricultural pollution was raised as a major concern during the Inquiry. In November 2018 the Minister issued a Written Statement which will introduce regulations to tackle agricultural pollution. The proposed regulations are expected to come into force in January 2020 and will provide greater protection for water quality from excessive nutrients.

Other concerns raised include obstructions to migration, water abstraction and robust enforcement activity. The Inquiry showed NRW and others are already carrying out a great deal of work on these areas, however, the detail of these actions is not always shared with the public and not readily accessible. For this reason the Minister has asked NRW to take the lead on a Welsh specific plan of action for the protection of Salmon and Sea Trout, working with stakeholders, including anglers. It will pull together all the current work being taken forward by all relevant parties, as well as identify gaps and actions to address these. Welsh Government officials will work with NRW to contribute to this, as I hope will anglers and supporters of angling.

We expect the plan of action to be made public and shared with anglers, and other interested parties, before the Byelaws come into force on 1 January 2020.

Calling for a Local Inquiry was not a decision the Minister took lightly, however, it was necessary and many lessons have been learnt. Going forward, we will work with NRW to improve effective, meaningful and collaborative engagement with interested parties from the onset.

I hope you will take the opportunity to engage in this work to achieve our shared goal of addressing the decline in Salmon and Sea Trout stocks in our waters.

Yours sincerely



Gareth Bevington
Deputy Director
Marine and Fisheries Division